

NHS Health Scotland's Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Background

- [The Children and Young People Act \(Scotland\) 2014](#) places a set of duties on various public bodies, including NHS Health Scotland to be 'corporate parents'. With this role comes the responsibility to not only advocate the rights and wellbeing of 'care experienced young people' but to really make a difference to their lives.
- As a corporate parent, NHS Health Scotland must publish an action plan stating how we will meet our duties. This action plan is a live document that is constantly under review.

NHS Health Scotland's Corporate Parenting Duties

These duties fall under the following three themes and related duties:

- **Understand the issues that care experienced young people face and assess their needs**
 - Be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of care experienced young people
 - Assess the needs of care experienced young people for the services and support we provide. Within this duty, we should:
 - Assess individual care experienced young people's needs
 - Assess the needs of care experienced young people as a group
 - Respond to their needs
- **Promote the interests of care experienced young people and provide them with opportunities**
 - Promote the interests of care experienced young people
 - Provide them with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing
 - Take action to help them access the opportunities we are providing and make use of the services and access support available
- **Collaborate with other corporate parents and improve the way we work with care experienced young people**
 - Collaborate with other corporate parents
 - Take any other action we consider appropriate to improve the way we work with care experience young people

NHS Health Scotland's Role

NHS Health Scotland works in partnership with and through the public, private and third sectors. We have a national remit in which we provide and share knowledge on what works to reduce the unfair and avoidable differences in health for the people in Scotland. The inequalities in health are a key part of social justice (the fair and equal distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within society) and social inequalities in Scotland are a barrier to the right to health.

Our Vision

Our vision is a Scotland in which all of our people and communities have a fairer share of opportunities, resources and confidence to live longer, healthier lives. We have been working towards this vision since 2012 and have now set out our priorities for the next five years in our new Strategic Framework for Action: 'A Fairer Healthier Scotland 2017-22'. This says how we plan to carry out our mission to reduce the unfair health inequalities and improve health for people in Scotland.

Our Priorities

We have [five strategic priorities](#) which we will focus on and young people comes under one of these. We therefore welcome the leverage that comes with our corporate parenting duties, as this provides us with even more opportunity to advocate for the rights and wellbeing of care experienced young people in Scotland.

To do this, we will continue to:

- Provide evidence on what works to reduce health inequalities
- Work with and through all sectors in Scotland to put this evidence into action
- Support national and local policy makers to design and evaluate interventions that help to build a fairer, healthier Scotland

Our annual delivery plan says how we plan to carry out these functions. A few examples to promote the rights and health of young people include:

- our Public Health Science function being alert to and assessing the needs of the looked after children and young people population in Scotland through the monitoring of national data for this population group e.g. the publication of the [Scottish Public Health Observatory- Children and Young People; key data](#)
- our Evidence for Action function gathering evidence about the effectiveness of public health interventions or 'evidence based' knowledge, synthesising and summarising this evidence at a national level e.g. [attachment in kinship care factsheet](#)
- our Health Equity function manage the production and distribution of knowledge-based resources, seeking to promote and influence [knowledge into action](#) with a wide range of partners in a position to affect positive change for looked after children by influencing action both the fundamental and wider determinants of health such as promoting access to and opportunity for health services, quality housing, leisure facilities, good learning and work, safety in the community and in the home, e.g. [Health-Promoting Care: A toolkit for improving the health of looked after children](#).

Our corporate parenting duties are implicit within our strategic vision, which is underpinned by a human rights-based approach and the national approach to 'Getting It Right for Every Child' in Scotland.

Health Scotland's Corporate Parenting Approach and Actions to Fulfil our Duty

We plan to fulfil our corporate parenting duties through the four themes set out below, which each have a set of actions underneath them in bold. All actions will be completed by 31 March 2019:

- 1. Our core function – deliver our annual business plan**
- 2. Practice improvement – we will continuously improve how and what we do for care experienced young people**
- 3. Workforce development – we will develop the knowledge and awareness of our workforce of the needs of care experienced young people**
- 4. Workforce policies and practices - our people as carers**

Theme One - Our Core Function

Care experienced young people are identified as a key population group across all five of our priorities.

The evidence tells us that a high proportion of children are living in difficult circumstances, where they have less opportunity than others to a good start and a healthy and happy life. To achieve and sustain good health throughout life, action is required at both a societal and individual level to reduce the barriers to equality of opportunity and to strengthen resilience when faced with adversity. Care experienced young people should have equitable access to healthy outcomes, including a nurturing family life with adequate income, protection from harm, education, safe and healthy environments, health and social services, leisure, arts and culture.

The actions (deliverables) for this priority area focus on children, young people and families through upstream activities which aim to achieve a significant impact.

The Right of the Child to Good Health

The Scottish Government's aim is that there should be no discernible difference across all indicators between the life outcomes of young people who have experienced the care system and their peers who have not. To support this, we will:

- Produce an updated Children and Young People (CYP) profile which meets the needs of CPP (Community Planning Partnership) partners.**
- Review and update the Children and Young People's Profile produced in 2010, with the revised profile to provide a balanced set of indicators relating to health, wellbeing and broader social determinants of health.**
<http://www.scotpho.org.uk/media/1568/cyp-profile-overview-report-sept17.pdf>

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) have an impact on people's health which can affect our health and wellbeing throughout life. This has negatives implications for children, young people, adults and older people. Responding to ACEs is hugely relevant in our role as a corporate parent for looked after children in Scotland. We will continue to:

- **Host and lead the Scottish ACEs Hub to lead action on preventing and responding to childhood adversity in Scotland following publication of the Scottish Public Health Network Report '[Polishing the Diamonds](#)' to address these issues.**
- **Refresh evidence supporting looked after children's wellbeing**
- **Produce and disseminate a 'Health Promoting Care Toolkit'**

Theme Two - Practice improvement

Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

HIIA (Health Inequalities Impact Assessment) provides a structured approach for organisations to consider how their plans or decisions might adversely affect different groups of people in Scotland. If identified, these negative impacts should not only be mitigated against but we should attempt to advance equality for all groups where we can. HIIA should be integral to our planning and development processes rather than a separate exercise.

[Health Scotland's HIIA approach](#) includes specific consideration of Young People, Carers and Looked After Children. To ensure we consider potential impacts of our work on care experienced young people, we will continue to:

- **HIIA all of our work as part of our business planning process for 2018/19, addressing impacts and advancing equality for this group where possible.**
- **Provide learning opportunities for our staff in relation to inequalities, equalities and human rights.**

Theme Three - Workforce development

Within Health Scotland's L&D (Learning and Development) programme, there are opportunities to develop our workforce to maximise our potential to influence more positive change for care experienced young people. Our current programme is based on three co-dependant competency areas including knowledge, attitudes and skills.

To assist our delivery as a corporate parent, we will continue to develop our organisational knowledge, awareness and understanding of:

- **Who our key stakeholders are**, our relationships with them, the key drivers that influence their work, their individual aims and cultures.
- **Knowledge into Action** and why it is key to our strategy and what is needed to maximise its potential.
- Our **core knowledge base**, developing knowledge in particular specialisms, keeping abreast of the best and most recent evidence, information and developments.

To build on this, we will:

- **Continue to provide an L&D programme that is linked to our Strategic Framework for Action and based on the analysis of staff PDPs.**
- **Undertake a learning needs assessment for staff who are most likely to have the greatest potential to affect positive change for care experienced young people.**
- **Integrate specific L&D opportunities which arise from the above needs assessment into our L&D programme where possible, e.g. training on corporate parenting’, ‘The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014’ and GIRFEC**

Theme Four – Our Workforce Policies and Practices

In addition to our work, all of our workforce policies are subject to a HIIA as part of their development and review. This ensures our staff who may have a caring role are supported and have fair and equitable access to positive solutions. Some of these solutions include flexible working and carers leave. To support our people who are carers, we will:

- **HIIA our workforce policies to ensure we consider this particular group of staff and their needs.**
- **Scope and implement the Supporting the Work-Life Balance PIN Policy and the Adoption Leave and Fostering Policy**

Staff Volunteer Opportunities

We recognise the potential that our organisation and staff members could make towards the Children’s Panel, Scotland and staff are able to take leave within their working hours to undertake this role. To support this further, we will:

- **Promote the children’s panel member role and support volunteers while highlighting the opportunities to take part in the children’s hearings system, providing capacity and support to a life changing process for these children and families.**
- **Promote the benefits of a Looked After Young Person Mentoring Programme to uncover, nurture, develop and help realise the skills and capabilities in looked after young people. These pathways are critical to young people, opening doors to qualifications, employment and aspirations they may wish to fulfil.**

Our Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

NHS Health Scotland is committed to the recruitment of two new modern apprentices and, as a corporate parent, we will proactively target care experienced young people to advance opportunities for them. To do this, we will:

- **Identify relevant partner agencies (e.g. Who Cares Scotland, CELCIS) to help us more effectively reach this group of young people so they have access to the opportunities we are providing,**
- **Follow a values based recruitment and selection approach as opposed to a more traditional recruitment methods, with feedback discussions organised for successful and unsuccessful candidates.**
- **Provide a tailored induction programme for successful candidates and ongoing support and regular review meetings throughout their placement.**

Accountability and reporting

The actions set out within our Corporate Parenting Action Plan to fulfil our duties are integrated within our day to day work, our Strategic Framework for Action and our delivery plan. We are subject to internal and external scrutiny through our Health Governance Committee for core programme work and to our Board and Scottish Ministers through our [Annual Review](#), annual [Impact Assessment](#) and reporting on our four year [Equality Outcomes](#) as part of our public sector equality duties.

Advancing equality is fundamental to NHS Health Scotland's mission and our legal duty as a public body. The [Equality Act 2010](#) aims to protect people with characteristics which can make them more vulnerable to discrimination and poorer health outcomes.

Our equality vision is *'that everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of health and everyone should have equal opportunity to realise this right without discrimination'*. Health Scotland will:

- **Continue to review this live action plan, reporting on progress towards promoting equality of opportunity for care experienced young people as described above.**

15 February 2018